

The View From The *Ridge*



MurrayRidgeCenter
HELPING PEOPLE...FOR A LIFETIME

Murray Ridge Honors Two Community Members for Philanthropy, Volunteerism

C.A.R.E.S. Award — Myrtle Buxton

Myrtle Buxton and her late husband, Bill, led a relatively simple and frugal life. They were dedicated to their beloved daughter, Nina, who was involved with Murray Ridge for years before her passing in 2006. So, back in 2012, when Myrtle was looking for a worthy organization to assist, Murray Ridge was a natural fit. Her first amazing donation was used to purchase a much needed wheelchair accessible paratransit vehicle — and over the next six years she donated much more to Murray Ridge, all anonymously. She passed away in June of this year at 96 but her generosity to Murray Ridge carries on through her estate.

Volunteer of the Year Award — Sam Battle

Sam Battle first began working with individuals with developmental disabilities back in his high school days. He saw how poorly people with disabilities were sometimes treated by others, and came to learn that "it's not so bad to be different." In 1978, when he was hired by the Lorain County Advocacy Program to coordinate community based programs for individuals with developmental disabilities, he recognized the popularity of bowling in Lorain County and began the Ridge Runners Bowling League. What started 40 years ago with 35 bowlers today has 88 and has become a place where bowlers, volunteers and family members gather to enjoy a good time together.



Murray Ridge's two most prestigious awards were presented by Superintendent Amber Fisher at the agency's recent In-Service Day at LCCC.

At left, Gary Koepp accepts the C.A.R.E.S. Award on behalf of the late Myrtle Buxton who generously donated funding to Murray Ridge during the final years of her life and through her estate. Mr. Koepp was Mrs. Buxton's Business Manager.

At right, Sam Battle is shown accepting the Marilyn Hupfer Volunteer of the Year Award for his many years of work with the Ridge Runners Bowling League.



Murray Ridge Center Holds Annual Agency In-Service

On October 12, the staff of Murray Ridge Center gathered at Lorain County Community College (LCCC) to celebrate the men and women who work tirelessly each and every day in our school, Early Intervention Department, Adult Services programs, Residential Department, Service and Support Administration Department, and other administrative and support roles.

In addition to the presentation of the agency's C.A.R.E.S. and Volunteer of the Year Awards (see story on page 1), here are some of the highlights of the day.

ANNUAL ADDRESS

Superintendent Amber Fisher delivered the annual address, asking each department to stand and be recognized as she highlighted the many successes Murray Ridge Center has had the past year — including overwhelming passage of our levy in May — and what we have to look forward to in the future.

Among her remarks was the announcement that Murray Ridge Center **will be receiving a three-year accreditation**, the highest currently available, from the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD).

"Moving forward, we must continue to concentrate on delivering and arranging for excellent services, and helping people with developmental disabilities to pursue their goals, while living meaningful, productive lives filled with friendship and happiness," she said.

RECOGNITION OF STAFF

Special recognition was given to individuals who this year reached the milestones of 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30 years of service to our Murray Ridge consumers. Also recognized were staff members who contributed hundreds of volunteer hours, in addition to their regular duties throughout the year, to support the mission of Murray Ridge, and the staff members who had perfect attendance from October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2018. Congratulations to our amazing Murray Ridge staff!

35 Years



Kathy Justy (center) with her supervisor Jeff Miller (left) and Superintendent Amber Fisher.

30 Years



Jill Camp (center) with her supervisor, Cindy White (left) and Amber Fisher.

30 Years



Donna Smith (center) with her supervisor Jeff Miller and Amber Fisher.

30 Years



Lydia Hawkinberry (center) with her supervisor Kevin Eye (left) and Amber Fisher.

More Photos from the Agency In-Service



Staff celebrating 25 years of service along with their supervisors.



Staff celebrating 20 years of service, along with their supervisors.



Above Left: (from left): Renee Mele (OOVC), Rick Adkins (LOVC), Shawn Hatcher and Noreen Romano (both EOVC).

Above Center: R.I.C.H.E.S. employee suggestion committee members (from left), Kristin Dickerhoff, Amanda Giovannazzo, Jordan Brown, Paul Doseck, Tanya Guitar and Starr Price.

Above Right: Christine Ash, Administrator of the Meister Road Home with Janet Standfield, a cook/aide at Meister.

Left: Murray Ridge School Developmental Specialist Kathy Bevaque with Aide Kamaria Jones.

Right: Sandy Desai from Service and Support Administration (SSA) with Betty Spradling from Purchasing.



'Acts of Giving Back' Program Still Going Strong!



Shown at left, attendees of the Oberlin Opportunity and Vocational Center (OOVC) recently held a fundraiser which raised \$270 for 'Sleep in Heavenly Peace' — a local nonprofit that builds beds for Lorain County Children who don't have a bed to sleep in. Several individuals from the OOVC visited the organization to present the check — and (like Jeff Moore) to try their hands at building a bed!



Left: Members of the Elyria Opportunity and Vocational Center (EOVC) Service Club held a fundraiser to assist Valor Home which provides transitional housing to homeless male veterans in Lorain County. Jesse Frisch from the EOVC is shown presenting the donation to a Valor House representative.

Below left: Consumers at the Oberlin Opportunity and Vocational Center (OOVC), such as Angela Murphy, had another great gardening season and donated fresh produce to a local food bank in Oberlin. Donations from the 'Plant a Row' program included green beans, cucumbers, tomatoes, onions and green peppers. Special thanks go to program participant Ed Perry who took on the planting from the beginning and all others who helped it prosper.

Below right: Once a month, consumers from the Lorain Opportunity and Vocational Center (LOVC) volunteer at the Animal Protective League. Eli Fisher and Kenneth Martin are shown playing with some of the cute kittens at the APL.



Murray Ridge Special Olympics Success Continues



BOWLING: The Murray Ridge Fall Bowling Team recently brought back two gold medals from the State Bowling Tournament. At left (top) are: Wendy Smitkowski and Walter Schrenkel (standing) and Joseph Cechura and Lori Norton (seated). Left (below) are Donna Wolfe, Mindy Eckenrode and Sarah Ward.

SOFTBALL: Several Murray Ridge athletes brought back gold from the recent State Softball Skills Competition, including: Casey West (above), Joseph Varner (top right) and Sarah Ward (below right).



Exceptional Service Award Winners Named



Shawna Livingston, of a Developmental Specialist in the Murray Ridge Early Intervention Program, was recently presented with an Exceptional Service Award for the 2nd Quarter of 2018.

In the nomination letter submitted by the Kerepesi Family,

Shawna was described as, "Helpful, encouraging, inspiring, comforting, compassionate, committed, caring, patient, reliable, kind and (having) a great

Pictured, l-r: Exceptional Service Award winner Shawna Livingston; Board Member Bev Gedid; and Early Intervention Supervisor Heather Knoble.

personality. . . We can't thank Shawna enough for the light she turned on in our son's mind, body and actions. We are grateful for all the help from Murray Ridge, and most of all, Shawna."

Emily Ambrosio, of the Murray Ridge Service and Support Administration (SSA) Department, was recently presented with the Exceptional Service Award for the 3rd Quarter of 2018.

Emily's nominator praised her for the patience, compassion and resourcefulness with which she assisted a young adult to address significant challenges.

"I cannot say enough about the wonderful work that Emily has done in getting him situated with his new life. She truly has been a blessing for this young man and now, because of her, he is in such a better place and happy!!!!"



Pictured, l-r: Exceptional Service Award winner Emily Ambrosio; Board Member Dan White; Superintendent Amber Fisher.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Murray Ridge Center was once again pleased to participate in **National Disability Employment Awareness Month** — an annual awareness campaign that takes place each October. Murray Ridge Center's Supported Employment Program provides services to assist individuals to choose, obtain, and maintain employment in the community. We're proud to salute the nearly 1,000 Lorain County citizens with developmental disabilities who are part of the local workforce, and the more than 100 local businesses that provide jobs for these individuals. Through our three Opportunity and Vocational Centers (OVCs) and Supported Employment Program, Murray Ridge Center continues to focus on finding and placing individuals in positions where they can grow and excel in today's competitive job market. Anyone interested in more information on the Murray Ridge Supported Employment program can call (440) 324-4993.

Check out the stories below for just a couple examples of how our program participants are making a huge difference in our local business community!



Ashley Spradling — Ashley has worked at Nutrition Group in Lorain for almost two years. Nutrition Group is a warehouse that prepares lunches for schools in Lorain County. She washes and sanitizes pots and pans, and does light cleaning of the kitchen and bathroom. She also transfers food from the coolers to the kitchen staff who prepare the lunches. Her shift is 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Since it prepares school lunches, the Nutrition Group operates during the school year from late August through late May, and is closed for the summer. However, Ashley refuses to take the summer off and instead opts to go to the Lorain OVC and work at the Port Authority and Cutting Dynamics Incorporated, as needed.

Janet Kleve — Janet began receiving Murray Ridge services in August 2012. She started by attending the Elyria OVC doing assembly, labeling and packaging job tasks. She then began participating in supported group employment. She has since worked at a variety of sites on mobile cleaning crews, groundskeeping crews, and a dishwashing crew. She has also volunteered at the Elyria Salvation Army, Lorain Neighborhood Alliance, Avon Lake Community Resource Center, Carlisle Metro Parks Halloween Fair, Lorain County Fair, Friendship Animal Protective League, and Habitat for Humanity. This year, Murray Ridge Supported Employment staff assisted her in obtaining employment as a dishwasher at Nick's Family Restaurant in Elyria. Janet's supported living staff provide her with the transportation needed to travel to and from her job. She enjoys attending dances, going shopping, eating out at restaurants and visiting friends and family. She has lots of energy and is enthusiastic about everything she does!



New Community Education/Volunteer Director Named

Please welcome **Chris Vasco** as the new Community Education/Volunteer Director at Murray Ridge Center.

Chris has a wealth of experience in Marketing and Public Relations, including work with Summit County Children Services, Fairview General Hospital, and with his own PR business, Vasco Communications, which has represented a variety of clients, including Elyria United Methodist Village. Chris and his wife, Liz, live in Fairview Park and have two grown children, and two grandchildren.



Fall Fun for Murray Ridge School, Preschool, Early Intervention



Left: Physical Therapist Becky Farmer with Brylan Robinson at Preston's Hope Park in Beachwood. Center and right, families and children enjoyed their visit to Miller's Apple Hill Farm in Amherst

Murray Ridge Has Got Talent



Congratulations to Mark Oliveras of North Ridgeville, who attends Murray Ridge's Elyria Opportunity/Vocational Center (EOVC) for taking First Prize in this year's Talent Show competition featuring the top three winning performers from each of Murray Ridge's three OVCs. Mark brought down the house with an energetic rendition of Ricky Martin's 'Livin' La Vida Loca.' Second Place went to Tiajana Crumble and James Wilson, from the Lorain Opportunity/Vocational Center (LOVC) and Diana Clement from the EOVC took Third Place. Special thanks to community judges Anne Findlan, former assistant superintendent at Murray Ridge, Michele Gray from Our Lady of the Wayside, Sheryl Ownbey from Empowering People and Maria Hisey of Echoing Lake.

Lorain County Board of
Developmental Disabilities

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